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ABSTRACT

Strategies for developing school/community collaboration to solve the problems facing America's youth are presented in this booklet. Part I, section 1 reviews the conditions that place students at risk, conditions engendered by changes in the family and ethnic distribution and insufficient spending for education. The second section of part I presents arguments for education as the best defense against crime and poverty. Two conclusions are that America's children are a truly endangered species and that socioeconomic problems of at-risk students must be addressed. The second part of the booklet highlights 10 holistic strategies for educational improvement developed by the National School Boards Association and the American Association of School Administrators. A rationale and starting point are described for each of the following strategies: focus on children; establish collaboration among school boards, administrators, teachers, community leaders, and governmental institutions at the federal, state, and local levels; involve parents and other adult volunteers; offer parent education program in every school; renew the school curriculum; ensure equal and ready access to high quality education; provide early childhood education and child care programs; attract quality educators with emphasis on minorities; demand adequate funding; and help immigrant assimilation into the mainstream. (7 references) (LMI)

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American Association of School Administrators
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BEYOND THE SCHOOLS

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How Schools & Communities Must Collaborate To Solve The Problems Facing America's Youth

ED 323 716

Part I by
Dr. Harold L. Hodgkinson
Part II containing joint recommendations by AASA and NSBA

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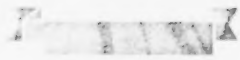

"...The very foundation of democracy is being corroded as our young people are consigned toward America's form of social concentration camps without walls."

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Foreword

Excellence and equity in education for *all* is essential if we hope to maintain a free and democratic society and sustain a dynamic free-market economy.

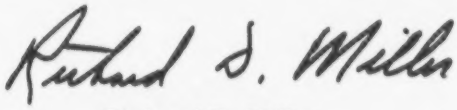
The spotlight has fallen squarely on the nation's schools as the last great hope for successfully dealing with the multitude of challenges facing America. A symbol of that hope is the 1989 Education Summit, where the president of the United States and state governors formulated a series of six goals for the nation's schools.

Just outside that spotlight are grim realities. First, schools are profoundly affected by worsening social and economic conditions that are devastating to many of America's children and youth. Second, our schools simply can't solve the country's problems alone.

Part I of this publication reviews some of the alarming realities that put students at risk and increase the degree of difficulty for schools. Unless our nation deals with these social and economic problems, we stand the chance of developing a permanent "underclass."

Part II highlights "Ten Strategies for Improvement" developed by the National School Boards Association and the American Association of School Administrators in light of the alarming realities identified in Part I. We hope that these suggested strategies and activities will serve as a departure point for discussion, debate, and planning. Central to each strategy is the need for schools and other community agencies to collaborate on behalf of our children and youth. A holistic approach is needed if we are to bring our youth into mature, responsible, and productive adulthood, capable of meeting successfully the challenges our free society will face in the 21st century.

Again, the schools can't, by themselves, solve all the problems or deal with all the societal challenges pointed out in this publication. The problems themselves and the solutions go "beyond the schools." That's why comprehensive, pervasive collaboration of the public schools with all the other resources serving youth in a community is absolutely necessary for the future success of our society.



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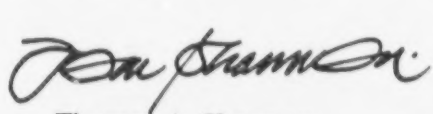

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PART I

Education Reform Versus Reality

America's best students are on a par with the world's best, but our "bottom third" undoubtedly performs worse than students in any of the industrialized democracies. More than one-third of America's children are at risk of failure in school even before they enter the kindergarten door for the first time.

What role can education play in changing this situation? To decide that, we as a nation must understand why some children have the deck stacked against them from—or almost from—the beginning.

Problems...Where They Begin

Here are some of the major causes of problems affecting our children and youth:

- Each year, about 350,000 children are born to mothers who were addicted to cocaine during pregnancy. Many of the surviving children have strikingly short attention spans, poor coordination, and other physical problems, including drug addiction.
- About 40,000 children annually are born with alcohol-related birth defects, which can cause a range of impairments, including mental retardation, hypersensitivity, and language problems.
- About 6.7 percent, or 260,000 children, are born each year with lower than normal birth weights. Those babies are one-and-a-half to twice as likely to need special education services.

- Twenty percent of America's preschool children have not been vaccinated against polio.
- One-fourth of pregnant mothers get no physical care of any sort during the crucial first trimester of pregnancy. About 20 percent of handicapped children would not be handicapped if the mother had received just one physical examination in the first trimester.
- Since 1987, one-fourth of all preschool children in the United States have lived in poverty.

Problems Added to Problems

Still other problems have critical implications for a significant portion of the entire school-age population:

- In 1987, 2.2 million reports of child abuse or neglect were made to child protective service agencies. This was triple the number in 1976.
- Today, 15 million children are being reared by single mothers, whose average family income is about $11,000. This is within $1,000 of the poverty line, which in 1988 was set at an annual income of $10,000 for a family of 3. (The average family income for a couple with children was slightly more than $34,000 per year in 1988.)
- At least 2 million children of school age have no adult supervision after school.
- On any given night, from 50,000 to 200,000 children have no home. In 1988, 40 percent of shelter users were families with children.

"I have learned that our children are a mirror, an honest reflection of their parents and their world. Sometimes the reflection is flattering and at other times, we simply do not like what we see; but we must never turn away."

—President George Bush

Changes in Society

Two major changes in society—changes in the family and changes in ethnic distribution among the population—are responsible for the current situation.

The Family

Between 1980 and 1990, the American family changed as shown below:

	1980	1990	% Change
All households	80,467,000	93,920,000	+16.7
Family households	59,190,000	66,652,000	+12.4
Married couples	48,990,000	52,837,000	+ 7.9
without children	24,210,000	28,315,000	+17.0
with children	24,780,000	24,522,000	- 1.0
Single female head	8,205,000	11,130,000	+35.6
Single male head	1,995,000	2,575,000	+29.1
People living alone	18,202,000	22,879,000	+25.7
People living with nonrelatives	3,075,000	4,500,000	+46.3

Atypical family grows. Every kind of "atypical" family increased during the decade, while the formerly "typical" family—a married couple with children—declined. Almost half of all America's youth, but a large *majority* of black youth, will spend some years being reared by single parents. (In 1988, 4.3 million children lived with a mother who never married—an increase of 678 percent in the number of never-married mothers since 1970.)

Low income magnifies problems. Stresses of the single-parent home are magnified many times over by lack of adequate income.

Approximately 6 million workers in the nation today earn only the minimum wage; an additional 5-million-plus earn within 50 cents of minimum wage. Among these 11-plus-million workers, the largest group is comprised of women over age 25 with children to support. These women desperately need job skills to support their children, but are not well-represented in federally funded or other training programs.

One human example. To put these facts in human terms, think of a single low-income mother who is raising a child. She must have a place to live, in a nation where 8 million qualified low-income households compete for only 4 million low-income housing units. (Few or no new low-income housing units are being built in this country today.) She will pay a higher percentage of her income for housing than any other category of worker—more than 50 percent in some cases. It is highly unlikely that she can find housing that provides her child a quiet place to study.

In addition, this woman must get to work, often by public transportation. If her child is of preschool age, she will have to take the child to a day-care facility before she goes to work. This might involve four or more bus trips at each end of the day. (For such women, day-care centers, housing, and jobs usually are not located close to each other.)

It is a precarious life. If the child falls ill, the situation becomes even more complex. A missed bus or a disabled car might mean the rent cannot be paid. The salary check then might become a welfare check, a change that is painful not only to the woman and her child, but also to taxpayers. It would be far cheaper for society to help this mother escape impoverishment than to pay for the very expensive consequences of her poverty.

The education system alone cannot be responsible for remedying the economic difficulties facing this woman and her child. Our society's services—education, health, child care, transportation, housing, and employment services—must all function together to assist them and to provide the child a good start in life. Society, in other words, must devise a way to ensure that such children will not become a liability to the taxpayer and the nation. We need 1990s services for 1990s families.

Ethnic Distribution

The American population grew by 10 percent, or 23 million, from 1980 to 1990, to a new total of 249.8 million. The fastest growing groups are the oldest members of our population (the 100-or-over category in the 1990 Census shows 57,000, up from 32,000 in 1980). Minority populations are also growing rapidly.

Growth in the south and southwest. Ninety percent of this growth has occurred in the southern and western states, although some eastern states such as New York and New Jersey have started growing again. Only three states have experienced almost half the nation's growth: 11.7 million of the nation's 23 million increase occurred in Texas, Florida, and California. This can be linked to some political changes if we look at the increased votes in the U.S. House of Representatives by the year 2000:

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Shift in political clout. It is clear that the states with the largest growth in population and the most new political clout are the states with increased ethnic diversity. Here are the increases from 1980-1990 for various groups in the nation:

	1980 Total	1990 Total	Increase	%+
White	194.7 million	210.3 million	+15.6 million	8
Black	26.7 million	31. million	+4.3 million	16
Hispanic	14.6 million	21. million	+6.4 million	44
Asian, other	5.2 million	8.6 million	+3.4 million	65

Even though the number of whites grew by 15 million or 8 percent, their share of the total population declined from 86 to 84 percent. Nonwhites increased by 14 million. The numbers become even more interesting when one projects the youth populations and their changes from 1985-2000: 2.4 million more Hispanic youth, 1.7 million more black youth, and 483,000 Asian and other youth yields 4.6 million more minority youth, compared with 60,000 more white youth. Note that these increases represent primarily young children. We will be short of teenagers until 1998.

No children to waste. These findings make it abundantly clear that our society cannot ignore the needs of any child. Each one must become a successful adult if the economy, the work force, and the military—indeed the nation as a whole—are to thrive. *Work Force 2000* states that, of the 20 million new workers added to the American economy by the year 2000, only 18 percent of the net will be white males. The rest will be women, immigrants, and racial minorities.

Suburbanization to play key role. By the 1980s, the equity efforts of the sixties had begun to pay off in terms of minority entry into the middle class. The "middle" was loosely defined as having a college education, suburban living options, and a white-collar or professional job. As more and more jobs move to the suburbs along with the people, the ability of a city to allow either suburbanization or the development of middle income homes and jobs within the city limits will have a large effect on the ability of the metropolitan area—city plus suburbs—to be economically viable.

Suburbanization raises serious questions about our most intractable problem, the inner-city schools. It is in these schools that the highest percentage of our at-risk students can be found. Here classes are the largest, even though these children need the most individual attention. Health care, housing, transportation, personal security, and community stability are problematic. Recruitment and retention of teachers and administrators of high quality is very difficult; and racial segregation still exists to an appalling degree, despite our best efforts.

The inner-city dilemma. The problems of the inner-city schools are especially frustrating in light of the realization that *suburban* minority students who start out on an equal footing with suburban middle class white students—with parents who are college graduates and who hold managerial or professional jobs—tend to match similar white students in educational achievement. Indeed, for people of equal social and economic background, race tends to go away as a predictor of educational

Percent of Black Population Living in Suburbs

Different places in America are characterized by very different rates of black suburbanization, as the following chart makes clear:

Miami	69.0%	Cleveland	27.2%
Newark	52.9%	New Orleans	24.6%
District of Columbia	48.5%	Baltimore	23.5%
Los Angeles	46.5%	Memphis	15.4%
Atlanta	46.0%	Dallas	15.3%
Oakland, CA	39.5%	Detroit	14.9%
St. Louis	35.4%	Houston	14.0%
Birmingham	34.1%	Chicago	9.0%
Philadelphia	27.7%		

Source: *All One System: Demographics of Education and Service Delivery Systems*, Institute for Educational Leadership, 1985.

achievement. This fact alone is incredibly exciting, leading to very optimistic conclusions. But there is a snag: At this moment, millions of minority children and their parents are unable to enter the middle class because they are locked into inner-city environments from which there often is no escape and, at present, little possibility of improvement.

Although there is no evidence of a truly permanent "underclass" in America, a few more generations of systematic neglect of inner-city youth undoubtedly will result in one. Again, schools cannot reverse the trend alone. It is impossible to ask schools to improve in a socioeconomic vacuum. Inner-city job opportunities, health care, housing, transportation, and personal security must be improved markedly.

Comparisons With Youth in Other Nations Not Favorable

According to a study released by the U.S. Census Bureau in March 1990, America's youth are at far greater risk for social, economic, and health problems than are

children of the world's other developed nations. Although American children were the most vulnerable in most of the dimensions covered in the study, the highest numbers were in these categories:

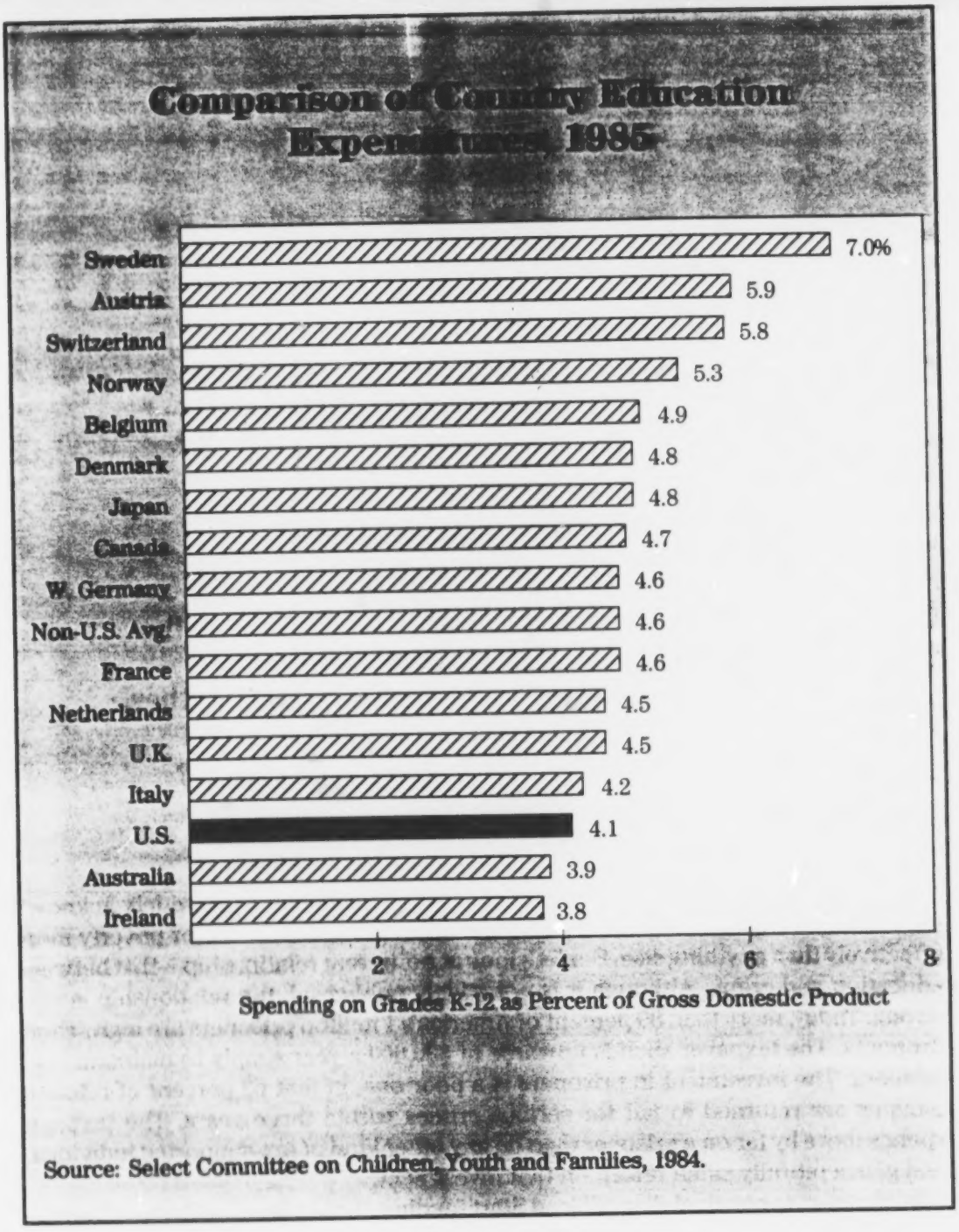
- Number of children affected by divorce
- Youth homicide rate
- Number (and percentage) of youths living in poverty
- Infant mortality rate
- Teenage pregnancy.

America in 1988 ranked 22nd in infant mortality, with a rate of 10 deaths per 1,000 live births. Young American males are five times as likely to be murdered as those in other nations. As has been mentioned, one-fourth of America's youngest people live in poverty—the younger the children, the higher the poverty rate. And some 15 million children are being reared by single parents, mostly as an aftermath of divorce. Finally, although international data are not available, it seems unlikely that any other nation can compete with our figure of 4.3 million children being reared by mothers who never married, plus 371,000 children being reared by never-married fathers.

A small investment. Both the Bush and Reagan administrations have made a major point of saying that Americans overspend on education compared with other nations. However, the data to which they refer includes America's spending for higher education, which is an area of tremendous effort for us. (The United States provides 5 percent of the world's elementary and secondary education, but 25 percent of the world's higher education.) When America's spending for K-12 education is compared with the expenditures of other nations, a spectacular difference becomes evident.

Significant funding variances within states. Even with the difficulties of establishing "levels of effort" for different nations, it is clear that many nations invest a larger share of their wealth in their children's education than does the United States. In addition, the differences in per-pupil expenditures within this country are unmatched by any centralized nation. States differ widely in the levels of effort they expend to educate children. Within many states themselves, the amount spent on some children is three to four times the amount spent on other children. Recent court decisions in Kentucky and Texas indicate that this is a growing area of concern in education policy. This range of expenditure, not only for education but also for other health and social services, is most characteristic of our nation. In terms of infant mortality and care, for example, it is possible to go from some of the best infant care in the world to some of the worst by taking the short drive from Scarsdale to Harlem.

These are a few of the reasons for asserting that America's "bottom third" of our youth is more likely to fail than the "bottom third" of any nation with which we usually compare ourselves. If our goal is to ensure that every young person can graduate from high school with a high level of knowledge and skills, then we must concentrate substantial fiscal and human resources on those children most likely to fail. At present, we concentrate our resources on those most unlikely to fail—children in relatively stable families in suburbs whose parents have a high level of education and income. All children deserve our support.


Comparison of Country Education Expenditures, 1985
Sweden 7.0%
Austria 5.9
Switzerland 5.8
Norway 5.3
Belgium 4.9
Denmark 4.8
Japan 4.8
Canada 4.7
W. Germany 4.6
Non-U.S. Avg. 4.6
France 4.6
Netherlands 4.5
U.K. 4.5
Italy 4.2
U.S. 4.1
Australia 3.9
Ireland 3.8
2
4
6
8
Spending on Grades K-12 as Percent of Gross Domestic Product
Source: Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families, 1984.

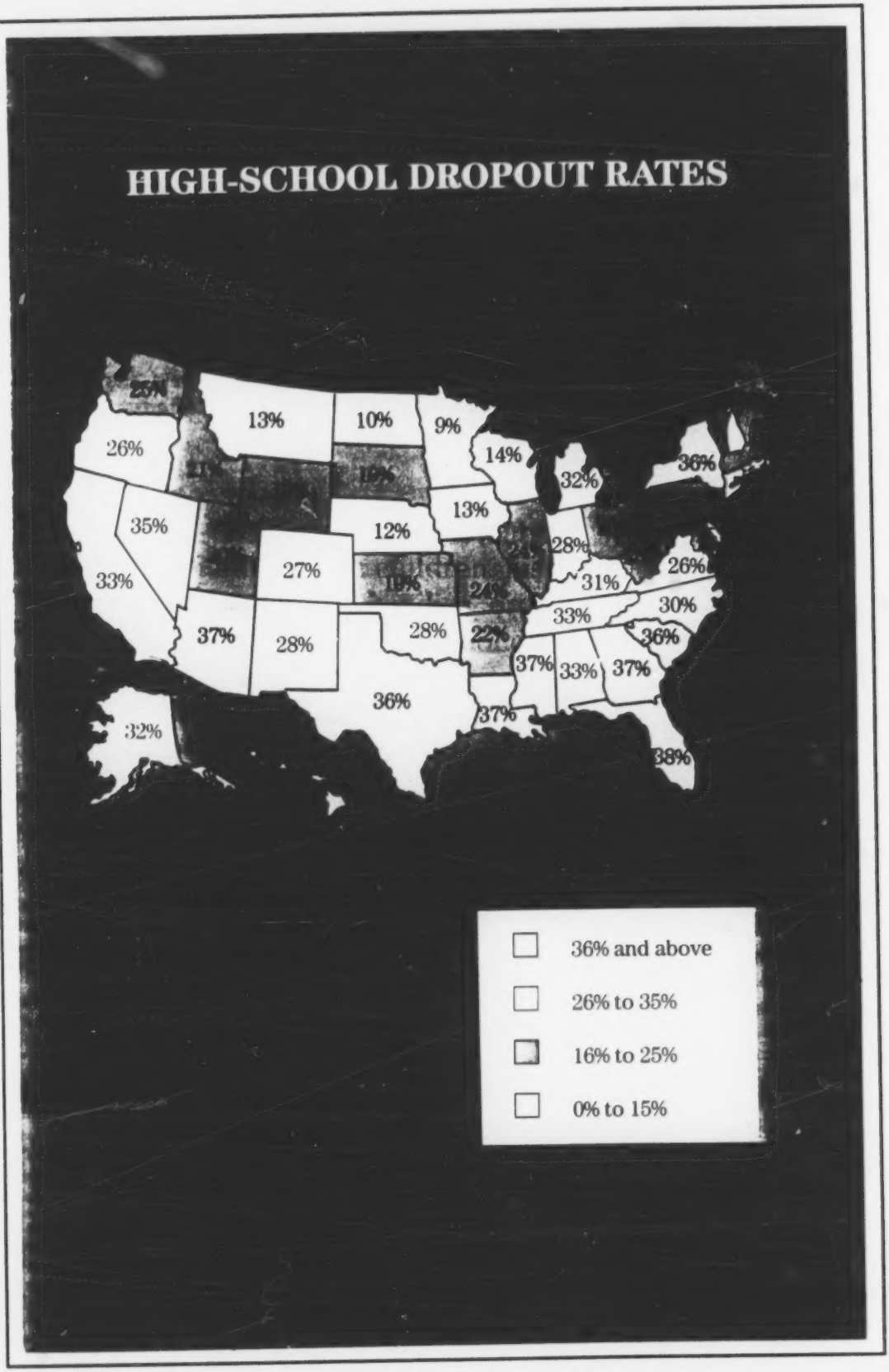
Education Is the Best Defense

Level of education counts. Think for a moment about two young families with children, just starting out. In one of the families, one or both of the parents has a high school diploma. In the other family, neither parent does. What's the poverty level for each type of family?

Alarming relationship between education and crime. It is widely acknowledged that increased levels of education will reduce the chances for poverty more effectively than anything else. But let's look at a different relationship—that between education and crime. Although it is not widely publicized, the relationship is very strong. Today, more than 80 percent of America's 1 million prisoners are high school dropouts. The taxpayer spends upwards of $20,000 a year simply to maintain each prisoner. The investment in prisoners is a poor one, in that 63 percent of released inmates are returned to jail for serious crimes within three years. The taxpayer spends more by far on a prisoner than on any other kind of tax-supported individual, and gets a pitifully small return on that investment.

In contrast, for every dollar of Head Start funding, the taxpayer will save $7 in later services not needed—a very profitable investment. A college student is supported by about $3,300 of tax money—another superb investment. Indeed, in Pennsylvania, it is seven times more expensive to have someone in the state "pen" than it is to have someone at Penn State!

Correlation between dropout and prisoner rates. The correlation between being a high school dropout and becoming a prisoner is reflected in the following displays. The map below shows the high school dropout rate for each state.



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In the following chart, the states on the left are those with the highest rate of high school graduation; the states on the right have the lowest level of high school graduation.

In addition, the states on the left, with one exception, are the states with the lowest rate of prisoners per 100,000 people, while the states on the right, with two exceptions, are the states with the highest level of prisoners per 100,000 population.

High School Dropouts

States with the lowest dropout rates also have the lowest prisoner levels. Those with high dropout rates have correspondingly high prisoner levels. Rates are given per 100,000 residents.

Lowest dropout rates (and lowest prisoner levels)			**Highest dropout rates** (and highest prisoner levels)		
1.	Minnesota	9.4	50.	Florida	41.2
2.	Wyoming	10.7	49.	Louisiana	39.9
3.	North Dakota	11.6	48.	Michigan	37.6
4.	Nebraska	13.3	47.	Georgia	37.5
5.	Montana	13.8	46.	New York	37.1
6.	Iowa	13.8	45.	Arizona	35.6
7.	Wisconsin	15.6	44.	Mississippi	35.2
8.	Ohio	17.2	43.	Texas	34.9
9.	Kansas	17.9	42.	California	33.9
10.	Utah	19.4	41.	Alaska	33.3
11.	Connecticut	19.5	40.	South Carolina	33.1
12.	South Dakota	20.3	39.	Kentucky	32.6
13.	Pennsylvania	21.3	38.	North Carolina	32.2
				Tennessee	32.2

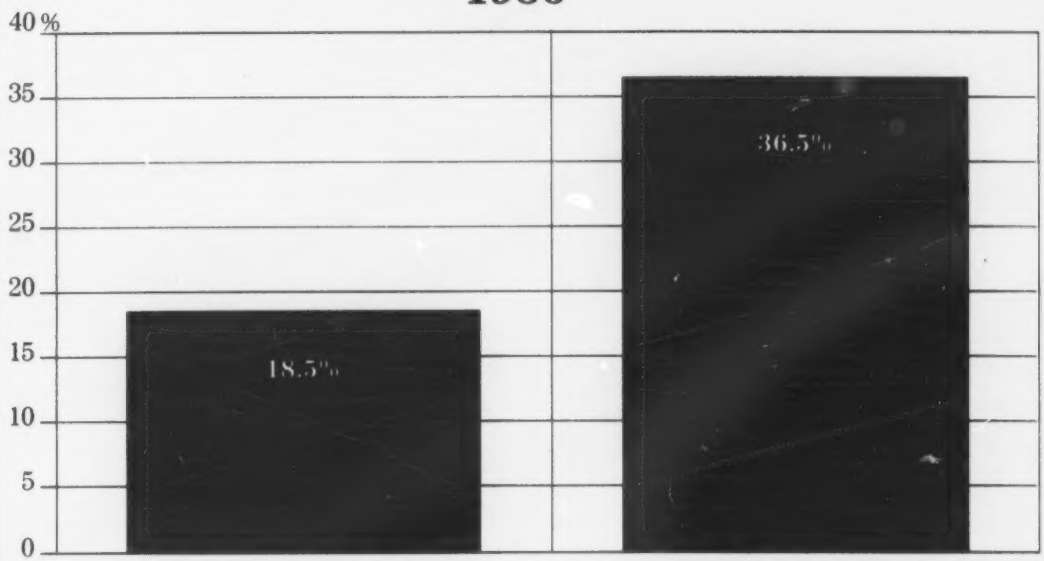
Source: H. Hodgkinson, *The Same Client*, Institute for Educational Leadership, Washington, D.C., 1989, p. 15.

America's prison population has doubled in less than a decade. Our incarceration rate is the third highest in the world, right behind those of the Soviet Union and South Africa. Given the increase in drug-related crime and the get-tough policies now prevalent, it is possible that the number of prisoners could reach 2 million before the

'90s are over. Our prisoner costs are increasing faster than the costs of any other social service, including education and health. Building more jail cells doesn't reduce the crime rate. No sensible criminal is likely to stop committing crime because of the increase in jail cells.

Minimum wages not enough. One thing, however, *does* reduce crime rates—and that is increased levels of education. Consider again our family headed by high school dropouts: The best job these parents can get without a high school diploma is a minimum wage job at about $9,000 a year for a full-time worker. Is that enough to allow the young family to think about buying a house? Owning a car? Getting the children through college? Clearly not. Young high school dropouts in minimum-wage jobs have little chance to experience the American Dream—unless, of course, they turn to crime. In 1989, 4 million Americans worked full-time, yet were eligible for poverty benefits. Since the time of Benjamin Franklin, America's promise has been

Poverty Rates of Young Families—Householder Under 25 1986



18.5%
Married Couple
Family Householder
a *High School Graduate*
1 or More Children

36.5%
Married Couple
Family Householder
a *High School Dropout*
1 or More Children

Source: *The Forgotten Half: Pathways to Success for America's Youth and Young Families*, The William T. Grant Foundation on Work, Family and Citizenship, 1988.

that one who works will not be poor. Where are the fruits of the work ethic for these 4 million people?

Long-term solutions needed. But as levels of education increase, so do earnings. As earnings increase, the propensity for crime decreases. To reduce the crime rate, the best policy for the nation is to make sure every American child graduates from high school. Already some school districts such as those of Greeley, Colorado, and Springfield, Missouri, have developed strategic plans to achieve the goal of zero dropouts by 1995. To do so ultimately will result in a reduction in crime. Unfortunately, political pressures force elected officials to look for expedient remedies, such as building jails, rather than for long-term solutions, such as ensuring that every young person graduates from high school.

Conclusion

This section has demonstrated two points:

- America's children are a truly endangered species.
- Educators *alone* cannot "fix" the problem of the educational underachievement of at-risk children because their status results to a large extent from their socioeconomic problems.

Children who are hungry or insecure about their personal safety, who have limited access to decent health care, who enjoy little guidance in the matter of values or ethics, who daily try to cope with an unwholesome environment, and who do not have a decent, supervised place to play cannot be reached effectively by the schools. To address these problems so that children can be "enabled" to achieve educationally will require the committed collaboration of school systems and the broad spectrum of governmental agencies that are responsible for the health and well-being of children.

We are left with two unanswered questions:

1. What can educators and others do right now that they are not yet doing to reduce the number and extent of at-risk children and youth in America and to assist them in achieving well in school?
2. How can schools cooperate more closely with other agencies so that all can work toward the urgent goal of providing services to the same client?

Suggested answers follow.

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Ten Strategies For Improvement

Education and other segments of society must overcome formidable obstacles and respond in an integrated holistic manner to the needs of all children if America is to remain preeminent, economically and politically, in our increasingly interdependent world.

A holistic approach will be required if the national goals proclaimed by the nation's governors and the president are to be achieved. Those goals envision that, by the year 2000:

- All children in America will start school ready to learn.
- The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.
- American students will leave grades 4,8, and 12 having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matters including English, mathematics, science, history and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment.
- U.S. students will be first in the world in science and mathematics achievement.
- Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
- Every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.

Reaching these goals within less than a decade will require sustained commitment to children by school administrators, school boards, teachers, other school staff members, parents, business and professional people, and governmental leaders.

Where to begin?

Although any list of strategies for school board members and administrators necessarily will be incomplete, AASA and NSBA suggest 10. Each of the 10 will require astute leadership from school boards and superintendents. Each recognizes the need for collaboration, rather than competition, at all levels. Here, then, are the strategies:

Focus on Children

RATIONALE

Everything schools do should benefit students in some way. Occasionally, schools focus so thoroughly on efficiency that they seem to be unapproachable or unresponsive.

WHERE TO START

- Create education impact statements that assess the positive and negative effects of programs and policies.
- Initiate organization-wide and community-wide collaborative efforts that focus on student needs.
- Assess the physical and mental health needs of children in the community and then rally support for addressing those needs.
- Develop programs that deal with drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy, and suicide prevention. These programs should build self-esteem and ensure that students have adequate decision-making skills.
- Teach students how to avoid contracting AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.
- Understand and adapt to the dramatic changes that have taken place within society. Begin by learning the demographics of the community.

Establish Collaboration Among School Boards, Administrators, Teachers, Community Leaders, and Governmental Institutions at the Federal, State, and Local Levels

RATIONALE

Social and economic conditions that affect children and young people continue to worsen, thereby increasing each student's difficulty in achieving a sound education. Schools cannot deal with these problems single-handedly. Therefore school boards and superintendents must encourage collaboration with individuals and agencies that are related both directly and indirectly to the schools.

WHERE TO START

- Build and participate actively in coalitions at the federal, state, and local levels to formulate a solid, holistic approach to helping children within each community.
- Develop a community-wide vision for the schools and establish higher baseline expectations for students.
- Reach out to community organizations and agencies that serve youth and families, and help them coordinate their efforts for maximum impact.
- Bring the community's elected and unofficial leaders together to pursue common goals and create a "can do" attitude about positive change.
- Work closely with state and federal policy makers to ensure that their mandates provide for sound education.
- Participate in planning children's services programming at the federal, state, and local levels that is predicated on a holistic approach to the needs of children.
- Create a climate in the schools and in the community that supports continued renewal of the education system.

- Develop partnerships to promote collaboration between the schools and the business and political communities to generate greater levels of political support for education.
- Ensure that qualified people train teachers and administrators to identify and respond to symptoms displayed by students who are at risk.
- Strive to build broader support for even better education.

Involve Parents and Other Adult Volunteers

RATIONALE

Research has shown that parents' involvement is a prime determinant in children's learning and the success of schools. And today, when there are many parents who are not actively involved in their children's education, it's also important to recruit other adult volunteers to help children and youth in need.

WHERE TO START

- Involve staff and community in getting more involved in their children's education.
- Schedule meetings with parents, parent-teacher conferences, and volunteer opportunities so the greatest number of parents and other adults can participate.
- Accommodate the needs of those parents who may be intimidated by the school environment by conducting meetings away from school grounds.
- Recognize parents for their cooperation with the schools and their interest in their children's education.
- Learn about the needs of parents through surveys, advisory groups, and other means; and involve parents in decision making as extensively as possible.
- Recruit and train adult volunteers to give special attention to students in need.

Offer a Parent Education Program in Every School

RATIONALE

When parents understand their roles and responsibilities, they are better able to help their children. Parents of children at risk might not know what to expect at various stages of child development. They might not understand the impact of the example they set as a child's first teacher and role model.

WHERE TO START

- Collaborate with other agencies to ensure adult literacy because, as we've noted in Part I, the parents' education level often determines a child's success or lack of success in school.
- Offer training in parenting skills to all parents and other volunteers who are willing to participate.

"Human history becomes more
and more a race between
education and catastrophe."

—H. G. Wells

Renew the School Curriculum

RATIONALE

Changes in society, the development of new knowledge, discoveries, as well as shifts in economic and scientific needs, require ongoing renewal of the school curriculum to prepare students for employment and the responsibilities of citizenship.

WHERE TO START

- Collaborate with staff and the community to develop a curriculum based in large part on what students need to know and be able to do. Objectives should be to ensure students' development and to maintain a democratic society and a free-market economy.
- Seek constant feedback that will be used to evaluate. Then renew or correct each and every education program—thereby guaranteeing that clear, accurate progress reports will be made to the public.
- Provide an education program that will help each student be at least at grade level when graduating from high school. Develop a commitment among staff and the community to achieve this goal.
- Communicate the school system's learning and achievement goals clearly to the community, making regular progress reports.
- Provide time at school board meetings for discussing curricular and instructional issues.
- Communicate on a regular basis significant information about curriculum and instruction—gained from professional reading, conference attendance, appropriate research, and other means—to board members, administrators, and staff.

Ensure Equal and Ready Access to High Quality Education for All Students

RATIONALE

Our nation is committed to providing educational opportunities for *all* students. Every student should have an opportunity to learn and develop to the best of his or her ability.

WHERE TO START

- Ensure that students have equal access to all education programs.
- Ensure that students are correctly placed in regular and special education programs, and that their needs are met appropriately.

"Recently, it's gotten so bad here, one of my students had to go for three interviews just to become a busboy... a busboy! I mean, how difficult can that be?"

—Joseph Nazaroff, program coordinator at 70001 on the employment situation in San Antonio, Texas

Provide Early Childhood Education and Child-Care Programs that Have Appropriate, Strong Educational Components

RATIONALE

Research shows that 5-year-old children have already developed at least half of their intelligence. Therefore, prenatal care and programs to enhance the readiness of children for school will help reduce or eliminate many problems later on.

WHERE TO START

- Convene a community-wide task force to study early childhood education and child-care needs and to pinpoint needed improvements. The task force might include educators, business people, representatives of community service agencies and religious institutions, providers of preschool programs and child care, and other individuals and groups.
- Mobilize support for funds needed to establish and sustain early childhood education programs, such as all-day kindergartens, enrichment programs for younger children, and other programs tailored to their needs.
- Meet with health care professionals to discuss prenatal and infant health needs of the community, and then rally support for professionals who can serve those needs.
- Explore the necessity and desirability of providing community and social services for children and families within school facilities.
- Develop "Welcome to School" packets and provide them to parents of newborns, letting them know important facts about child development; providing tips on parenting; and inviting them to come to school and discuss their child's education.

Devise Ways of Attracting the Brightest and Best to Careers in Education, with Special Emphasis on Minorities

RATIONALE

To be most effective, schools must attract the very best teachers and administrators. Special emphasis must be placed on recruiting minority teachers and administrators to serve as role models for students.

WHERE TO START

- Focus on increasing the number of minorities and women in education, both as teachers and administrators, to provide appropriate role models.
- Undertake aggressive recruitment efforts to identify the most qualified and committed students and attract them into education careers. This recruitment might begin in high school classrooms.
- Investigate the desirability of developing cooperative recruitment programs with neighboring districts in order to attract needed teachers, including minorities.
- Encourage students to consider careers in education. Evaluate existing recruitment, hiring, and promotion policies; and provide salaries and working conditions that will attract and retain top candidates.
- Seek funding and recognition for high quality teachers and administrators.
- Work with colleges and universities to enhance the training of teachers and administrators.
- Organize professional development programs for school personnel in collaboration with representatives of business and community organizations.
- Make wellness programs available for school employees.

Demand Adequate Funding

RATIONALE

School systems, faced with growing expectations, must receive enough funding to meet those expectations.

WHERE TO START

- Persuade the Congress, state legislators, and the people of each local community to adequately fund programming that is based on a holistic approach to the needs of children.
- Assess both the needs of the school staff and the needs of the community when creating school budgets—to ensure greater understanding of and support for providing the necessary resources.
- Strongly encourage federal and state policy makers who mandate various education programs to fund those programs.

"I think people have a tendency to take the simplistic solution and simply say, 'We'll cut a percentage here and a percentage here.' And I think, when you deal with kids, you can't deal with percentages."

—Edward R. Sarasin, principal, Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School, on proposed budget cuts

Help Move Immigrants into the Mainstream of American Life Quickly

RATIONALE

Immigration rates have increased dramatically during the past two decades. Most immigrants require education services that have often strained existing curriculum, staff, and facilities.

WHERE TO START

- Collaborate with immigration officials to build an understanding of the effect of dramatically increased immigration on the schools.
- Provide adult literacy programs for immigrants. Collaborate with other community organizations to provide bilingual education programs that will help both immigrant students and their parents.

Conclusion

It will take a vigorous grassroots effort across America if the goals set forth by our nation's governors and the President are to be met, or even approached, by the year 2000.

NSBA and AASA recommend these 10 strategies for consideration by all school leaders and others who want to foster effective grassroots efforts. Pursued vigorously, these strategies could lead to a better education for generations to come.

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